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# SERVICE

## USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

APRIL-MAY 1976

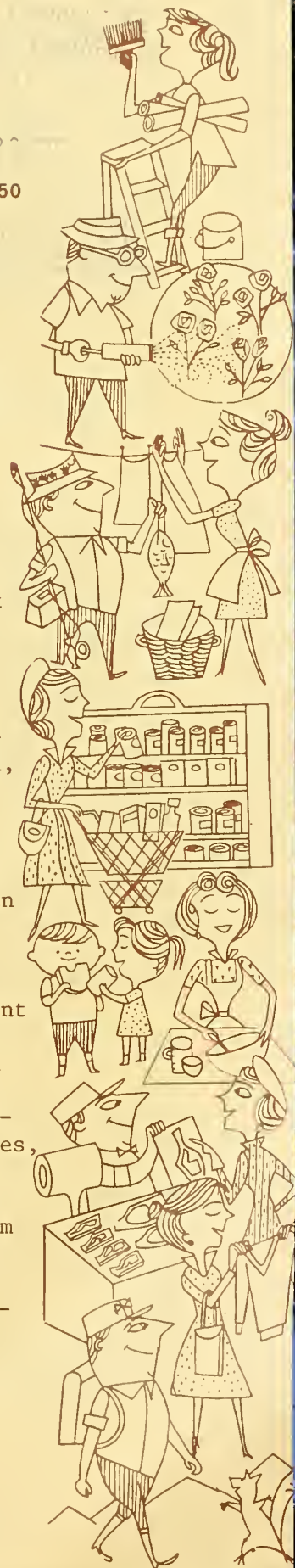
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### USDA BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES: A SELECTION

A Glimpse Of The Third Century. USDA will join 15 other federal agencies and many industrial firms in providing a preview of how today's scientific and technological achievements will make life better and more comfortable during our nation's third century. The vehicle for this trip into the future is the Bicentennial Exposition on Science and Technology being held at the Kennedy Space Center, Florida. Visitors at the USDA pavilion will get a glimpse of what is being done to insure our having enough food to eat in the years ahead. Exhibit viewers will learn about the sheer size of the food production needed, the decisions that must be made as agriculture competes with other activities for land. They will see how plants are being remade and redesigned genetically to be more productive; what is being done to control and eradicate insect pests and to recycle wastes; how new methods of tilling are improving the productivity of the soil and what techniques are used to keep food clean and healthful. The Exposition, the only one sponsored by the U.S. Government during the Bicentennial Year, will be open from May 30 through September 6.

A Rare and Priceless Gift. A specially-designed building on the grounds of USDA's National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. will open its doors to bicentennial visitors on July 10. The structure -- a garden complex actually -- is an unusual pavilion designed in the Japanese manner. What it will house is even more unusual: A collection of 53 rare and priceless bonsai plants and six ancient "viewing stones" with handsome patterns drawn by natural forces. The collection is a bicentennial gift to the American people from Japan. The bonsai, which range from 30 to 350 years of age, are diminutive trees shaped by skillful horticultural practices to resemble trees growing in their natural settings. The viewing stones, frequently extraordinary in themselves, are traditionally used to enhance the settings for bonsai. The Japanese excel at growing bonsai, an art that came to their country in the 14th century from China. The gift bonsai were presented by the Nippon Bonsai Association and includes some plants donated by the Japanese Royal Family. The bonsai in their own lovely housing will become a permanent part of the Arboretum plant collections on display year round.

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## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

Knee Deep In A Problem. Water sports may be America's most popular outdoor activity. If, however, heavy rains mean you can stay home and paddle your canoe in the basement or water ski across your lawn, you may not feel like being a sport about it. Unless you live in a rice paddy, what you have is a drainage problem. The cause can range from seasonal high water tables or springs and seeps to slow soil permeability. Sometimes, natural drainage systems have been blocked or altered during construction causing runoff water to seek other routes -- perhaps around and through your home. Some solutions include installations on individual properties or in neighborhoods; others need community-wide action. To help you dry out, USDA's Soil Conservation Service has issued a new booklet, Drainage Around Your Home, which identifies some causes of drainage problems and offers possible solutions. Copies of the booklet are available for 25 cents each from Consumer Information, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

## THINGS DONE AND YET TO COME

Unfinished Miracles. Rising populations and greater demand for food pose a continuing challenge to the world. In the front ranks of those meeting the challenge are agricultural scientists, such as those working at the nation's Agricultural Experiment Stations. Their particular challenge is to find ways to increase agricultural productivity and to improve the stability of food supplies -- all without increasing the demand for energy or harming the environment. Some of the research accomplishments -- such as new high-yielding crop varieties and the drug dicumarol that prevents blood clotting -- and some of the work being done -- such as developing foods with increased nutritional value and improving on ways to conserve land and water resources -- are presented in a new color film, "Unfinished Miracles." The 28½-minute film, suitable for both agricultural and non-agricultural audiences, was cooperatively produced by USDA's Cooperative State Research Service and the Experiment Stations. Copies of "Unfinished Miracles" are on loan from state Agricultural Experiment Stations, most of which are located at the land-grant universities in each state. You can check with your local Cooperative Extension agent for the address.

## FOOD FOR THRIFTY FAMILIES

An Aid For Good Nutrition, Economically. A sample meal plan based on the least expensive of the four USDA Family Food Plans has been developed by food economists and nutritionists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. The sample plan is designed to help families who receive food stamps and others who need to economize on food to obtain nutritious diets at thriftily as possible. The plan, available in a 22-page booklet entitled "Food For Thrifty Families," offers menus, lists of food and recipes to provide meals for a family of four for a month. Tips on nutrition and on food buying and preparation for the maximum economy are included. Copies of "Food For Thrifty Families" are available free from the Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.



## CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

New Law Brings Many Changes. A new law, P.L. 94-105, makes a number of substantial changes in the Child Nutrition Programs administered by USDA. Among some of the major changes are:

- For purposes of food programs, "school" has been redefined to include institutions where children live. This in effect extends the National School Lunch Program to institutions, such as orphanages and hospitals for the mentally retarded, which are structured to serve children but do not necessarily have education programs. Private as well as public institutions are eligible if they are licensed and non-profit.
- The National Breakfast Program received permanent authorization. The program has been a pilot project available in about 16 percent of the schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Now any school that needs to provide breakfast can join.
- Senior high school students now have the right to decide what they want for lunch and are not required to take food they don't intend to eat. This means high school cafeterias must "offer" instead of "serve" the Type A lunch prescribed by the National School Lunch Program. However, students still must pay the full price for the Type A lunch whether or not they take all the components. This change is aimed at the problem of food waste, a problem primarily in high school lunch programs.
- All schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are now required to offer reduced-price lunches to needy children. Also family income eligibility is now set at 95 percent above the income poverty guidelines rather than the previous maximum of 75 percent.
- The Child Care Food Program is now available to all public and private, non-profit day care centers, including family day care homes, Head Start Centers, settlement houses and recreation centers. Before P.L. 94-105, the program was available only through day care centers in poverty areas or in areas with a great many working mothers.
- The Summer Food Program has been extended to residential summer camps. It was limited to nonresidential, non-profit public and private institutions, such as city recreation programs. Too, summer camps and nonresidential institutions qualify for the program if one-third, rather than one-half, of the children they serve are needy; and all meals are now served free.
- The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was extended through September 1978. Eligibility includes women from the time of pregnancy through 6 months postpartum and children until their fifth birthday. Previously, women could be in the program only up to a maximum of 6 weeks postpartum and children until age four.

The Face of Rural America. During 1975, USDA sent dozens of photographers across the land. Their assignment was to record with their cameras life in rural America as it is today. And take photos they did -- of what they saw and experienced with American families at work and at play on the farms, on the ranches, and in the small towns from coast to coast. Some 300 of their photographs are being incorporated into the 1976 Yearbook of Agriculture, The Face of Rural America. One of USDA's major bicentennial projects, the Yearbook will serve as a pictorial history for generations to come of what rural America was like "back in the good old days" of 1976. The Yearbook will be ready for release in mid-July. Some 100 photos gathered for the Yearbook will be used to form a photo exhibit scheduled from mid-July through September in USDA's Administration Building in Washington, D.C. From October through December, the exhibit will be at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

Herbs in Knots. USDA's National Arboretum is the recipient of a bicentennial gift with a flavor. This is a \$250,000 herb garden donated by the Herb Society of America. The garden will contain a formal "knot" garden with plants arranged in intricate patterns resembling various kinds of knots. Also planned are specialty sections, containing herbs used for medicines, flavoring, oils, dyes, and teas; herbs used by American Indians and colonial settlers; and herbs that attract bees. Species roses -- the old-fashioned nonhybrid types -- will also be featured in one special section. The garden's size and layout will permit accommodation of fairly large groups for visits and study. When the herb garden is ready for viewing -- sometime in mid-summer of 1977 -- the Arboretum will expand its educational programs to include herb culture and uses.

Menus For 200 Years of History. Some 50 million children are already engaged in a USDA bicentennial project. It is the Child Nutrition Bicentennial Program. The children are those participating in the National School Lunch Program. Center of the bicentennial program, which began in July 1975, and runs through 1976, is a series of heritage menus served during each school month. The menu themes are taken from different periods of the nation's 200-year history -- the first Thanksgiving, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Industrial Revolution. Corresponding with each menu are classroom projects on the history of food and agriculture, principles of nutrition, and good nutrition practices. Schools are also encouraged to develop their own menus and activities which highlight historical events of special significance to their communities. The bicentennial program is a cooperative project of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, state departments of education, and the American School Food Service Association.

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SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Special Reports Divison, Room 459-A, Washington, D.C. 20250, or telephone 202-447-5437.

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